



DRINKING WATER MID-CYCLE SUBCOMMITTEE

Conference Call Summary

Friday, July 13, 2007

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Welcome

Dr. Gary Saylor, University of Tennessee, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. Gary Saylor, Chair of the Drinking Water Mid-Cycle Subcommittee, welcomed the Subcommittee members to the conference call and thanked them for their time. Subcommittee members received a draft of the mid-cycle report on July 1, 2007. A revised, formatted report was forwarded to the Subcommittee members this morning. Dr. Saylor confirmed that all Subcommittee members were present on the conference call. A list of participants is attached.

Administrative Procedures

Ms. Edith Coates, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Office of Research and Development (ORD), Subcommittee Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

Ms. Edith Coates explained that this was a meeting of the Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) Drinking Water Mid-Cycle Subcommittee and stated that if any members of the public were present on the conference call, there would be time for their comments when her remarks were complete. She explained that this was a meeting for the Subcommittee to discuss its draft report, and EPA staff members would comment only if the Subcommittee members asked them specific questions and the Subcommittee Chair recognized them to respond. She asked Drs. Saylor, James Johnson, and James Raymer to submit their homework to her no later than Wednesday, July 18, 2007.

Dr. Saylor asked if Ms. Coates had received his last round of homework. Ms. Coates responded that she had received the Drinking Water Subcommittee homework from Ms. Lori Kowalski, DFO for the BOSC Executive Committee, who had separated out Dr. Saylor's Executive Committee homework from his Drinking Water Mid-Cycle Subcommittee homework.

Public Comment

Ms. Coates called for public comments at 1:10 p.m. No comments were offered.

Discussion of Draft Report

Dr. Gary Saylor, Subcommittee Chair

Dr. Saylor explained that all of the Subcommittee members' comments regarding the draft report had been incorporated into the penultimate, formatted draft that each of them had received that morning. He explained that the Subcommittee would examine the draft page-by-page to ensure that each member is in agreement with the wording.

He asked members to confirm that their information was correct on the title page of the report, including the spelling of their names and institutions. Ms. Coates explained that Dr. Mary Ward is no longer a consultant to the Subcommittee and this designation should be removed from the title page. Dr. Johnson suggested that the Subcommittee members' names be placed in alphabetical order following the Chair's name.

There were no changes to the Table of Contents on page 2.

Page 3 of the draft report includes an explanation of the principal charge questions. Dr. Sayler added Web site links to the original program review report and ORD's response to that report to make it easier to find the background information for this report. There were no changes to page 3.

Dr. Sayler explained that page 4 is where the Subcommittee begins to address some of its specific findings and asked if there were any suggested changes to this page; there were none.

Page 5 starts the general recommendation section and final quantitative evaluation score. Dr. Sayler asked for confirmation from the Subcommittee members that there is consensus on the final ranking of "Exceeds Expectations" with the included caveats in the final paragraph of the quantitative evaluation. The Subcommittee members indicated that they are in agreement.

Dr. Johnson asked for a minor editorial change to the sentence that begins "It was also unclear..." at the end of line 25. He suggested that "whether" on line 26 be changed to "how." Dr. Chi-Hsin Selene Chou requested that the same sentence have the word "out" added after "carried." All Subcommittee members agreed to these changes. The new sentence reads, "It also was unclear how individual performance and award evaluations are carried out consistently across programs, centers and laboratories, although Agency-wide guidelines exist."

Dr. Sayler reiterated that the goal is for all editorial changes to be agreed on during this conference call so that he can make the changes and submit the revised document as the final document to the DFO. Therefore, the Subcommittee must approve all changes made during this discussion. The Subcommittee members agreed.

Dr. Sayler explained that the responses to the individual charge questions start on page 6. He read Charge Question #1 and asked if there were any changes to this page. Dr. Ward asked if the Multi-Year Plan (MYP) was still anticipated to be released in July. Dr. Sayler responded that he had not received an update. This report reflects the anticipated release date for the MYP as reported at the face-to-face meeting. There were no changes to this page.

The response to Charge Question #1 is continued on page 7. Dr. Ward commented that she liked the bulleted list at the top of page 7. She suggested that the paragraph that begins on line 23 be clarified. Dr. Sayler asked other members if they found the paragraph to be unclear; they did not. Dr. Ward stated that because no one else had an issue with the wording of the paragraph, she was willing to let it stand. Dr. Sayler added that this paragraph comments on the fact that the scientific leadership of the program remains unresolved and that this needs to be addressed by the program. The BOSC Executive Committee will vet the report, and if they determine that anything is unclear, the Subcommittee will have the opportunity to clarify their findings and add more details as necessary. If the changes suggested by the BOSC Executive Committee are substantive, it may require another Subcommittee conference call.

Page 8 is the response to Charge Question #2, which Dr. Sayler read to the group. The response was based on the expectation that the MYP will be released soon and as such is short. There were no changes to this page.

Dr. Sayler read Charge Question #3 at the top of page 9. He commented that the response to this question was well done and included a good deal of technical detail. Dr. Johnson commented that he did not think that he had the latest version of the report. He asked for confirmation that the sentence in the last paragraph on this page that started with “I think...” had been changed. Dr. Sayler responded that the change had been made.

Dr. Sayler read Charge Question #4 at the top of page 10 and reiterated that the Subcommittee’s response started with a discussion regarding leveraging of resources. Dr. Johnson asked if line 13 had been changed to read “...proposed revised MYP...” Dr. Sayler confirmed that this change had been made.

The Subcommittee’s overall quantitative rating is found on page 10. Dr. Sayler stated that this paragraph is important and he read it to the Subcommittee because it addresses the issue regarding the quantitative score. He asked if everyone agreed with the paragraph as it is written.

Dr. Johnson objected to the mention of milestones in line 4. If milestones of the program are examined, there may not be enough in place to substantiate the score. He suggested that the word “progress” be used because it does not imply a certain benchmark. Dr. Sayler suggested that the wording be changed to “progress toward milestones.” Dr. Johnson commented that he did not like the use of the word “milestone” in the sentence at all. Dr. Raymer agreed that “milestone” should be removed from that sentence and suggested that it be reintroduced into the following sentence. Dr. Johnson agreed. The new sentences will read, “Overall, the progress made by the DWRP exceeds expectations with respect to the quality of the science and progress made in the timeframe between the BOSC 2005 review report and this mid-cycle review (approximately 16 months). Progress to achieving milestones and on the development of the Multi-Year Plan was delayed because of the timeline for hiring a Program Director and OMB review of the revised LTGs.” Drs. Ward and Chou agreed with these changes.

Dr. Sayler asked if the Subcommittee members agreed with the suggested changes. The Subcommittee members unanimously agreed to the changes. Dr. Sayler stated that the report will be revised with the above changes and sent to Ms. Coates within 24 to 48 hours. The BOSC Executive Committee will review the report during a conference call in August 2007. He expects that it will be approved, but if it is not, then the Subcommittee will have to make the editorial changes. If the changes are more substantive in nature, then another conference call will need to be scheduled to discuss the changes before the BOSC can send the report to ORD. He asked if the Subcommittee members understood that there may be additional time requirements in the future; they responded that they understood.

Ms. Coates thanked the Subcommittee members for a job well done. Dr. Johnson informed Ms. Coates that he had sent her his homework via fax, so she should have received it. Dr. Sayler then adjourned the meeting at 1:27 p.m.

Action Items

- ✧ Dr. Sayler will make the following editorial changes to the report and send it to Ms. Coates within 24 to 48 hours of the conference call:
 - Remove “Consultant to the Committee” after Dr. Ward’s name on the front page.
 - Alphabetize the Subcommittee members following the Chair on the front page.
 - Change the sentence that begins on line 25 of page 5 to read: “It also was unclear how individual performance and award evaluations are carried out consistently across programs, centers and laboratories, although Agency-wide guidelines exist.”

- The first two sentences on page 11 will be changed to: “Overall, the progress made by the DWRP exceeds expectations with respect to the quality of the science and progress made in the timeframe between the BOSC 2005 review report and this mid-cycle review (approximately 16 months). Progress to achieving milestones and on the development of the Multi-Year Plan was delayed because of the timeline for hiring a Program Director and OMB review of the revised LTGs.”
- ✧ Drs. Raymer and Sayler will send their homework to Ms. Coates no later than Wednesday, July 18, 2007.

PARTICIPANTS LIST

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APPENDIX A: Teleconference Agenda

DRINKING WATER MID-CYCLE SUBCOMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE MEETING AGENDA July 13, 2007 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

CALL IN NUMBER: 866-299-3188
PASSCODE: 202-564-3408

Friday, July 13, 2007

1:00 p.m. - 1:05 p.m.	Welcome	Dr. Gary Sayler Chair, DW Mid-Cycle Subcommittee
1:05 p.m. - 1:10 p.m.	Administrative Procedures - FACA Rules and Procedures - Time Sheets	Edie Coates (EPA) DFO, DW Mid-Cycle Subcommittee
1:10 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.	Public Comment	
1:25 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Discussion of Draft Report	Dr. Gary Sayler Chair, DW Mid-Cycle Subcommittee Members, DW Mid-Cycle Subcommittee
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn	